

# Brief and Breezy.

FRESH FACTS AND FANCIES, WIT AND HUMOR, ANECDOTE AND VERSE.

THERE were no masters in Riverside, London, and no authority for the great mass of the people. Sailors ashore had no masters; the men who worked on the lighters and on the ships had no master except for the day; the ignoble horde of those who supplied the coarse pleasures of the sailors had no masters; they were not made to do anything but what they pleased; the church was not for them; their children were not sent to school; their only masters were the fear of the gallows, constantly dangled before their eyes at Execution Dock and on the shores of the Isle of Dogs, and their profound respect for the cat-o'-nine tails. They knew no morality; they had no other restraint; they altogether slid, ran, fell, leaped, danced and rolled swiftly and easily adown the Primrose Path; they fell into a savagery the like of which has never been known among the English folk since the days of their conversion to the Christian faith. It is only by searching and poking among unknown pamphlets and forgotten books that one finds out the actual depths of the English savagery of the last century. And it is not too much to say that for drunkenness, brutality and ignorance the Englishman of the baser kind touched about the lowest depth ever reached by civilized man during the last century. What he was in Riverside London, has been disclosed by Colquhoun, the police magistrate. Here he was, not only a drunkard, a brawler, a torturer of dumb beasts, a wife-beater, a profligate—he was also, with his fellows, engaged every day and all day long in vast systematic organized depredation. The people of the Riverside were all, to a man, river pirates; by day and by night they stole from the ships.

## My Mariner.

Oh, he goes away, singing,  
Singing over the sea,  
Oh, he comes again, bringing  
Joy and himself to me!  
Down through the rosemary hollow,  
And up the wet beach I ran  
My heart in a flutter to follow  
The flight of my sailor man.

He on a husband sitting  
Still in the house at home!  
Give me a mariner, fitting  
Also fishing or the foam!  
Give me a voice resounding  
The songs of the heavy main!  
Give me a free heart bounding  
Evermore blithe again!

Coming is better than going;  
But never was queen so grand  
As I, while I watch him blowing  
Away from the lazy land.  
I have wedded an ocean rover,  
And with him I own the sea;  
Yet over the waves come over,  
And anchor, my lad, by me.

Hark to his billywag laughter,  
Bulge on the homeward tide!  
Hark to it, heart! up and after,  
Off to the farther side.  
Down through the rosemary hollow,  
And over the sand hills, I go  
And swift as a seabird, follow  
And hark for a sail in sight!

## The Trombone.

It has always seemed an incomprehensibly stupid instrument to the uninitiated. It has hitherto been impossible to "mute" the trombone. Cornet, horn and trumpet have all been muted, either by the intrusion of a wooden plug into the bell, or, in the case of the cornet horn, by partly closing the bell with one of the hands of the player. In the trombone the bell is not only too far away to be muted in this manner, but the whole structure of the instrument makes such an operation impracticable. The problem has, however, been solved by an invention known as the "echo attachment." A piston placed just under the hand used in holding the trombone can be depressed by a touch of the middle finger, and is returned by a spring the moment pressure is removed. The effect of lowering the piston is to switch off the air current into a long and tortuous tube, the same length as the main body of the trombone. This terminates, not in a bell, but in a curious, irregular cone, so that the sound is not "blared forth," but only "gently toiled." The echo attachment is so arranged that the whole of it is hidden by the bell of the trombone when the player faces the audience. By its aid seemingly distant music can be produced in front of orchestra without the device of hiding the trombone behind the scenery, or in an angel's gallery.

## Canada at the Fair.

The mineral exhibit at the world's fair promises to be incomparably finer than any ever before made, either in this country or abroad. California and Colorado each is striving to surpass all other states, and claims that it will surely do so. Michigan, Montana and Missouri, too, are making a specialty of the exhibition of their remarkably rich and varied mineral resources, and are not without hope of winning the highest award. Almost every state possesses mineral resources of especial merit in one or more particulars, and will display its best. From altogether a wonderfully complete and valuable exhibit is a certainty. Then, too, many foreign nations, notably England, will make mineral exhibits of the most complete description. Canada will occupy 10,000 square feet for its mineral display. Half of it is desired by Ontario province, which intends to make an extensive exhibit, including lead, copper, iron, gold, graphite, mica, asbestos, phosphate of lime, gypsum, marble, petroleum, salt, terra cotta, clay, nickel, silver, and many varieties of marble, granite and other building material.

## How a Lady Taxpayer Held the Fort.

Two nice old ladies were walking in Central park just when the grass was in its first spring freshness, and leaving the path, they wandered off upon the turf, where they were soon espied by a policeman, who here down upon them with a dignity that only a policeman can display. "You must get right off this grass, ladies," said he, severely. Then one of the old ladies turned and faced him, "I don't mean to get off this grass," she said. "I have been paying taxes in this city for the last 25 years, and I have helped to pay for this grass, and now I mean to walk on it." She turned around placidly and continued her stroll. The policeman looked around to see if anyone had witnessed this defiance of the law, and, seeing no one, indulged in a large and expensive grin, and then went on his way, leaving the old ladies to their own desires.

## Cross-Cut Fairs.

It is just worth while to include "Out of the frying pan into the fire" and "The cure is worse than the disease" (which recalls the late Lord Derby's "I prefer the gout"), in order to mention the Chinese saw: "Cutting the mountain in two to avoid the tiger." One might almost

throw into the same odd lot the Ceylonese saying, "I gave pepper and I got ginger," or the (West Indian?) "Toko for yam," our own old "Tit-for-tat"; and the middle age, "A Roland for an Oliver," which indeed might again lead us back to another Cingalese parallel—"Like Noya and Polonga."

And to wind up there is a hackneyed Chinese proverb which does not exactly say "Tell me your company," and so forth, but runs: "Meng-tse's mother chose a neighborhood," which is not, after all, so unlike the northern farmer's saying. And, talking of rainy old farmers, one might quote the "Book of St. Albans," 1486:

For from thy kynsmen kest thee,  
Wrath not thy neighbors next thee,  
In a good cause countre threste thee,  
And sitte downe Robyn and reste thee.

Or, shall we make an end with an actuality? "Like to like, quoth the devil to the collier, when he was trying to cheat him in the dark."—*London Saturday Review.*

## The Foreigners.

Heavily in his breast  
The harrier's heart was beating,  
Ever the course shaped west,  
Ever the land retreating.

Mutely muttering loud,  
Naught all his hoping, his dreaming;  
Suddenly out of a cloud  
Wings were flashing and streaming!

Wings that told of the pest,  
Told of the bough and the blossom;  
Gave him the joy of his quest,  
Knelt the heart in his bosom.

Promising land at last,  
Creeping over and under,  
Fanning around his mast,  
What was the bird I wonder?

Nothing the Genesee cared,  
Were it osprey or swallow,  
The gray sea waste was dazed,  
Palm fringe and shore must follow.

Oh, when bleak skies break up  
With winds the bluebird is whirled in,  
I drink from the self-same cup  
The voyager pledges the world in.

For some of his joy must be  
In the flash of the blithe newcomer,  
Whose wing discovers to me  
Whole continents of summer!

## Harper's Beat.

What Organ First Relapses Into Slumber?

It is said by scientists to be a fact that all our senses do not slumber simultaneously, but that they fall into a happy state of insensibility one after another. The eyelids take the lead and obscure sight, the sense of taste is the next to lose its susceptibility, then follow smelling, hearing and touch; the last named being the lightest sleeper and most easily aroused. It is curious that, although the sense of smell is the first to slumber, it is the last to wake. Hearing, after touch, soonest regains consciousness. Certain muscles and parts of the body begin to sleep before others. Commencing with the feet, the slumberous influence works its way gradually upward to the center of nervous action. This will explain the necessity of having the feet comfortably warm before sound sleep is possible.

## Quacks and the Gullible.

Quacks have been, and quacks will be and there will always be a public ready to heed them and happy to pay them. The peony root of Galen, the cramp rings of the honorable and scientific Robert Boyle, the sacred balsam, and Sir Kenelm Digby's apothecary snuff, "composed of noble equalized subjects, which at once, or at most three times using it, with God's blessing," cured "the apoplexy and the lethargy, also vapors, drowsiness, impostumes, dizziness and pains and heaviness in the head," have all alike had their day, with countless pectorals, cordials and elixirs. New panaceas will arise in spite of all analyses and in the teeth of all exposures. Nor is it possible to believe that legislation directed against such industries would be of much avail, so hard must it always be to make laws for the effective protection of the pockets of the gullible.

## Taking It Coolly.

The ship of an admiral who was the Duke of Wellington's near connection, was wrecked. He was placed in command of a second ship, which was also lost and he himself was drowned. Lord Charles communicated the disaster to his father, who merely exclaimed, with Spartan coldness and brevity, "That's the second ship he has lost." The twin anecdote, so to call it, had reference to Lord Charles himself. Being ordered with his regiment abroad, he felt much concern at bidding farewell to his aged father, whom he might never see again. On his making the announcement, the duke, who had been reading, damped his emotion by saying, shortly, "Good-bye, Charles, good-bye!" and, taking a last look before leaving the room, the son was mortified to see that the father appeared to be as intent on his reading as ever.

## After the Battle.

Where the tawny tiger-lilies in the marshy meadows bloom  
And the tangled rushes wither by the red and sluggish stream  
There is silence all unbroken; there are secrets all unspoken  
That the trembling grass is hiding from the hill.

Where the mystic firs in cluster on the rocky hillside stand,  
Where the vines-cumpruned masses in the sunset's passion glow  
Lo! the bird-notes are a-dying and the troubled wind is sighing  
For the secret that the meadow must not know.

Over meadow, over mountain, in a city by the sea,  
There are wives and mothers waiting; there are eyes that watch in anguish, there are loving hearts that languish  
For the secret that shall nevermore be told.

## Mother-of-Pearl.

The most beautiful mother-of-pearl, unless that of the obalone be excepted, is obtained from the nautilus, which is a cephalopod and related to the cuttlefish. Cephalopod, only the mouth of its dwelling, the latter is composed of a series of empty chambers, each of which the animal has successively lived in and vacated as it grew bigger, building up behind it at each move a wall of purest pearl. These vacant rooms of pearl are all connected by a pneumatic tube, which enables the creature to so control the air supply in its house as to make the domicile lighter or heavier at will, in order to ascend or descend in the water. The shell is too thin to bear grinding, and so muriatic acid is used to remove the outer coat and disclose the exquisite nacre beneath. A method of treating such shells consists in drawing upon them with a brush and wax varnish any designs desired, after which

they are placed in a bath of weak acid. The latter eats away the outer coat wherever it is not protected by the varnish, the result being a lovely cameo with raised figures in white on a pearly ground. Nature, however, beats art hollow at this sort of work. In the cretaceous epoch, hundreds of thousands of years ago, there lived certain cephalopods, since extinct, which science calls "ammonites." The pearl they produced was of wonderful beauty, and many fossil ammonites dug up to-day have been so operated upon by the process of decay as to form elaborate patterns on the shell in pearl and white.

*English Magazine.*

To a Butterfly.  
"Butterfly,  
Thou trifling thing,  
Bright of color,  
Hast thou then no other care  
Than to ornament the air?  
Hither, thither,  
Hither, thither,  
Why and whither  
Dost thou go?"

"From the garden to the hedge,  
From the field flower to the sedge,  
I flutter, flutter everywhere,  
I strive to be fair  
I have no care—  
An adieu am I."

"O, feel it, feel it,  
Hence, thou useless thing, away!  
Nay!—thou needed beauty—stay!"  
—*Elizabeth Hall in St. Nicholas.*

## Large Rats, Small Bottles.

Lord Albenarle told Mrs. Beecher Stowe when she was in England a really witty and amusing story about the Duke of Wellington, which was, in fact, a squib of his own reflecting on the high-handed autocracy of the duke in the later days of his command of the army. Sitting next a lady at dinner, who had a smelling bottle containing musk, the duke is alleged to have said to her: "In India ladies put muskrats into their smelling bottles." "They must be very small rats, then," the lady observed. "Not at all—about the size of English rats." "The their smelling bottles must be very large." "Not at all—no bigger than yours." When the gentlemen entered the drawing room Lord Fitzroy Somerset whispered to the lady: "You now see the sort of difficulties we have at the Horse Guards; we are required to put very large rats into very small bottles." To hear the narrator mimic the Iron Duke's manner when he told this was "as good as a play."

## Could Not Tell a Lie.

"Tommy, how did you get the back of your neck all sunburned?"  
"Pullin' weeds in the garden."  
"But your hair is all wet, my son."  
"That perspiration."  
"Your vest is on the wrong side out, too."  
"Put it on that way as-purpose."  
"And how does it happen, Tommy, dear, that you have got Jakey Du Bois' trousers on?"  
(After a long pause) "Mother, I can't tell a lie. I've been a-swimmin'."

## He Had Enough.

He pounded on the carpet till his back was almost broke,  
He hung up window curtains till it ceased to be a joke.  
He wrestled with the kitchen stove till he was black and blue,  
He mended all her broken chairs, and sat down in the glue.  
He put her chromes up and tied his arms into a knot,  
And prayed to be beneath it when he dug her old grass plot.  
He labored on the wood-pile tree, his back refused the test,  
He polished the silver till his spirit longed to flee.  
He ran her shopping errands, raising blisters on his feet,  
He tugged home tons of samples with a meekness hard to beat.  
But when she asked him to select a Mother Hubbard gown,  
He crawled away one evening and he quietly skipped the town.

## He'll Bear Watching.

Mrs. Bilkins—I am afraid little Johnny intends to play truant this afternoon and creep under the circus tent.  
Mr. Bilkins—Why?  
Mrs. Bilkins—At lunch he didn't talk about anything but his lessons.

## Things That Should Be Different.

Popular Toronto musician spending the summer at her suburban residence agrees to play at a concert—Very sorry I am so late, Mr. Chairman.  
Chairman (anxious to be agreeable)—Oh, don't mention it, you are in plenty of time, the talent hasn't arrived from town yet.

## Another Smart Boy.

The Village Pastor—Johnny, you tell me you have been to Sunday school? The Bad Boy—Yes, sir. The Village Pastor—But, Johnny, your hair is wet. The Bad Boy—Yes, sir; it's a Baptist Sunday school.—*Jester.*

## The Shower.

Fall, gentle rain, in blessed, brimming drops;  
Cool with thy kiss the city's burning streets;  
Moisten the windows where the hot sun beats  
And fall refreshing on the thirsty crops.  
The warm wind for thy cordial greeting stops;  
The passing flock a merry welcome bids;  
The grass bends dimpling on the mountain tops;  
Fall, gentle rain, who the morning land  
Smiles thankful where each radiant gem appears:  
Fall like a benediction from His hand  
Who makes the storm and sunlight of the spheres;  
Who sends thee to make glad the living, and  
To mourn the dead that know no love or tears!  
—*Frank L. Stanton in Atlanta Constitution.*

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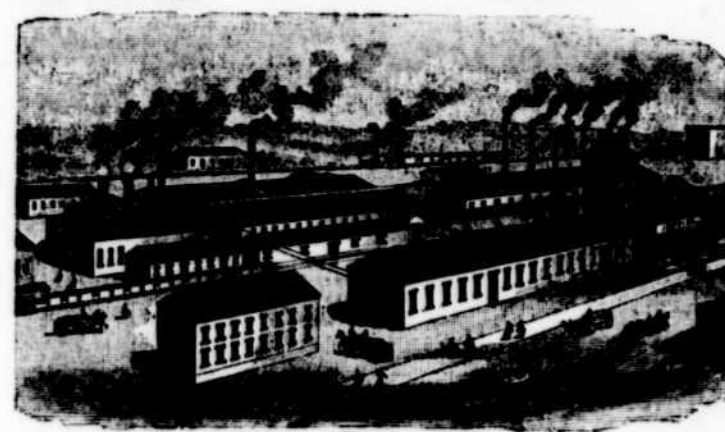
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